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www.health.ri.gov

Interim Advisory to All Rhode Island Schools

Date: June 5, 2009
To: All Schools
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Update on H1N1 (swine flu) in schools

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) continues to work closely with all Rhode Island schools to monitor for any unexplained increase in absenteeism rates. HEALTH would like to inform all schools of the following:

- HEALTH is beginning to see increased rates of mild influenza-like illness (fever plus cough or sore throat) in schools. This increase in flu-like symptoms does not automatically mean H1N1 (swine) flu is present in the school, but is suggestive of swine flu.
- HEALTH continues to investigate any report of unexplained increase in absenteeism.
- Continue to report school daily absenteeism information through normal channels. In addition, report any possible disease clusters (three or more of the same illness in the same classroom) directly to HEALTH at 222-2577.
- Ensure that continued, adequate handwashing supplies and/or hand sanitizer are available in classrooms and in common areas (cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries). Make sure that bathrooms are supplied with soap and paper towels. Remind students to wash hands frequently throughout the day.
- **If a student reports flu-like symptoms (fever plus cough or sore throat), the student should stay out of school for seven days after onset of symptoms or for at least 24 hours after symptoms have ended, whichever is longer.**

For information, visit <http://www.health.ri.gov> or call 1-800-942-7434. Thank you for your continued cooperation.